

A U S T R A L I A N G A R D E N H I S T O R Y

JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

AN INVENTORY OF AUSTRALIA'S MAJOR GARDENS

While the study of Australia's garden heritage could be said to have commenced with W. Hardy Wilson in 1910, it is, in truth, a relatively recent phenomenon.

Even twenty years ago when James Broadbent and I proposed to the University of Sydney that we would make a study of the colonial gardens of Sydney and its environs, our topic was clearly considered bizarre, and we were fortunate to be allowed to proceed. However real encouragement did come from those we met in our research and travels, especially Professor E. G. Waterhouse, Diana Pockley (then chairman of the National Trust's Garden Committee in NSW) and Dick Clough (at that time responsible for creating many significant modern landscapes in Canberra).

It is important to grasp that the study and practice of landscape architecture in Australia was then in its infancy and indeed Sydney had only one full-time landscape designer. Most gardens and magazines reflected 19th century horticultural traditions, often with municipal overtones.

During the 1970's interest in garden design and landscape architecture increased, and a range of research, publications and a major travelling exhibition led to the first Garden History conference, held in Melbourne in May 1980.

Nurtured by Peter Watts, and encouraged by Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, the AGHS came into being, and the ensuing talks, tours and conferences — Sydney and Mount Wilson (1982), Hobart and the Midlands (1982), Adelaide (1983), Ballarat and the Western Districts (1984), Canberra and environs (1985), Northern Tasmania (1986), Bowral

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SEPARATION FROM AGHS JOURNAL



Photo: Richard Stringer

Killymoon, Fingal, Tasmania

and the Southern Highlands (1987), Melbourne (1988) — provided a proper forum for information exchange, and enabled the examination of interesting and historic gardens.

When in 1978-80 the various branches of the National Trust of Australia were asked by the Australian Heritage Commission to survey the major gardens in their region for the Register of the National Estate, only Victoria (Peter Watts) and South Australia (RO Beames and Tony Whitehill) produced significant publications that provided definitive information on the topic. Such information for Victoria has been amplified, in a popular way, by John Patrick's Guidebook to Victoria's (Open) Gardens Scheme (1987).

Strangely the National Trust, outside of Victoria, has never instigated a proper programme of listing and protection for historic gardens throughout Australia. Accurate information on the major gardens throughout the rest of Australia is, at best, haphazard. Accordingly it seems entirely appropriate for the AGHS to, over time, publish a comprehensive inventory of Australia's major gardens. Each issue of the Society's official journal will contain a detailed account of one such garden, including, where possible, plans and archival photography. As the editor of the series I will ensure that a diverse range of gardens is researched and described each year. Leading photographer Richard Stringer has very kindly agreed to provide the AGHS Journal with pictures from his remarkable collection of negatives and transparencies covering gardens throughout Australia.



Delatite, Mansfield, Victoria

Howard Tanner

EDITORIAL

The publication of our own journal represents a major step forward for the Australian Garden History Society.

The Society was formed in 1980 at a conference in Melbourne where a committee was elected and a draft constitution drawn up. The primary concern of the society was to be the promotion of interest in and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. Nine years later we have 2,500 members and active branches in every state. Our annual conference and general meeting is held in a different centre each year where members from all states gather to discuss aspects of garden history, hear distinguished lecturers and visit gardens of interest. In order to encourage research into historic gardens a number of research grants are awarded each year. Every other year we invite an overseas guest lecturer to Australia and an all-state itinerary is arranged so he or she may be available to as many members as possible. Also, we have compiled a register of historic gardens in Australia with a view to lobbying for assistance for their preservation.

Our branches organise a wide range of activities for members, including tours, seminars, lectures, workshops and working-bees to help in the restoration of sites considered significant.

The size and activity of our membership suggests that we have been successful in acting as a focus for interest in our nation's garden heritage.

In the very early days of the Society we produced our own modest journal and later an agreement was reached with the newly-founded Australian Garden Journal that they would act as our "official" journal. Now that the latter arrangement is no longer in place, I am delighted to be asked to write the editorial for the first issue of our new Journal.

Regular sections will include:

- Editorial — to be rotated around office bearers on state and national committees.
- Garden profile — a serious article about one garden.
- Feature articles.
- Letters to the editor.
- Book reviews.
- Tour news — i.e. reports of tours organised by Head Office and information about forthcoming tours.
- Calendar of events — a fully integrated calendar listing all planned activities at national and state level.
- State news and views.
- Names of contact people in each state.

While the AGHS, at this stage, cannot match the production of a commercial magazine, our new publication will, I believe, be more relevant to our Society. Peter Watts will edit this publication until a permanent editor can be appointed.

Because of the unforeseen separation of the Society from the Australian Garden Journal, we have had considerable unbudgeted expenses with the setting up of both an office of our own and this new publication. Therefore, after a recent budget meeting, the National Committee has reluctantly decided that subscriptions will be increased to \$32.00 per annum. On your new



Jocelyn Mitchell

subscription form you will notice a column for donations, and any gifts to help us through this period would be most welcome. Donations to the AGHS are tax-deductible. The executive officer can provide details.

The new arrangements have meant an immense amount of work for the members of the National Committee and office-bearers for which I am extremely grateful. This Committee has a wide range of experience and expertise and for the information of members I have requested they be listed in this issue of the Journal.

To accomplish the many things we would like to continue with (e.g. research grants, lobbying) depends on the wealth of our Society and this in turn on our membership base and support of our members for our activities. Most of our new members come by word of mouth or because they wish to be included in one of our activities. We all know people who would enjoy being a member of the AGHS, so I urge you all to help us in a membership drive.

The recent changes, I believe, will be very much to the long-term benefit of the Society and will help us focus attention on our directions for the next few years.

I look forward to seeing many familiar faces at our Annual Conference in Queensland in October and to meeting many new members.

Jocelyn Mitchell
Chairperson

AGHS NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Mrs Jocelyn Mitchell: Chairperson (Victoria)

Owner of an historic garden and its associated plant nursery in Victoria's Western District. An active member of several charities. Played an important role in organising Victoria's Gardens Scheme.

Mrs Oline Richards: Vice-Chairperson (Western Australia)

Member of WA Branch Committee. Professional Landscape Architect with a special interest in environmental history and landscape and garden conservation. Numerous articles published in national and state journals on the themes of garden history and conservation. For several years the WA correspondent for the national journal *Landscape Australia*. Member of the National Trust (WA) Significant Tree Register Sub-Committee. Member of the Interim Committee of the Professional Historians and Researchers Association.

Mr Richard Ratcliffe: Honorary Secretary (ACT)

Landscape Advisor for the National Trust (ACT) Classification Committee. Principal Architect, Heritage and Environment, for Australian Construction Services, Head Office, Canberra. Author of forthcoming book on Paul Sorensen.

Mr Michael Bligh: Treasurer (New South Wales)

Chairman of Michael Bligh and Associates Pty Ltd., which specialises in the design of cold climate country gardens and properties. He is also a Company Director of two large grazing properties based at Delegate and Goulburn.

Dr John Brine: (South Australia)

Associate Professor in the Faculty of Architecture and Planning in the University of Adelaide and serves on the South Australian councils of both the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and the Royal Australian Planning Institute. Particular interests are in the conservation and management of heritage environments and in urban design and planning. Currently engaged on a townscape improvement program supported by the Australia Council.

Senator Jocelyn Newman: (Tasmania)

Member of the Australian Senate since 1986. Shadow Minister for Defence, Science and Personnel. Formerly practising Barrister and Solicitor. Actively involved in many community groups.

Mrs Fairie Nielsen: (Tasmania)

Farms her Tasmanian property single handedly. One of twelve founding fathers of the Rhododendron Gardens in Burnie. For many years Secretary of the Retarded Children's Association and plays an active part in several other local charities. Member of the Advisory Committee for the School of Fashion at the Burnie College of TAFE where she occasionally gives her time to counsel emotionally disturbed and wayward students.

Mr Tim North: (New South Wales)

Respected horticultural author. Proprietor and editor of The Australian Garden Journal. Former Secretary of the AGHS.

Mr John Patrick: (Victoria)

Garden consultant, author and broadcaster. Author of *The Australian Garden* and regular contributor to various magazines. Involved with and designed guidebook for the Open Garden Scheme in Victoria. Former member of several National Trust landscape and garden committees and lecturer at Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture.

Mr David Perkins: (Queensland)

Principal Conservation Officer (Policy), Queensland Department of Environment and Conservation. An engineering graduate, has studied biological sciences with emphasis on botany, has a background in environmental planning. Has been involved in the development of management and conservation plans for national parks and historic sites and in the supervision of site development and landscape planning for national parks.

Mrs Alethea Russell: (Victoria)

Director of the Heart Foundation of Victoria. Past Commissioner of the Girl Guides Association of Victoria and Past Chairperson of the Victorian Women's Branch of the Liberal Party. Currently active in several charities.

Mrs Caroline Simpson: (New South Wales)

Trustee of both the World Wild Life Fund of Australia and the National Parks Foundation. Has been involved, since 1955, with the National Trust (NSW) especially historic buildings and decorative arts and writes on these subjects.

Mr Howard Tanner: (New South Wales)

Councillor of Royal Australian Institute of Architects (NSW) and National Trust (NSW). Architect and Landscape Designer with Knox & Tanner Pty. Ltd.. Author of several books on history of Australian garden design. Former Chairperson of the AGHS.

Mr Peter Watts: (New South Wales)

Director of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW. Actively involved in the conservation and management of important historic houses and gardens. Author of several books on historic gardens. Founding Secretary of AGHS.

Mr Tony Whitehill: (South Australia)

Tree Advisory Officer at the Botanical Gardens, Adelaide. Member of the committee of the Significant Tree Register of the National Trust (SA). Deputy Chairman of the Stirling Council Botanic Advisory Board, and member of other official committees concerned with environmental issues.

AGHS RESEARCH AWARDS

Last year the AGHS initiated its Research Awards to promote research into selected aspects of Australian garden history. The three awards offered in 1988 were each of \$2000, and open to competition by students enrolled in Australian tertiary institutions.

John Brine, Ken Digby and Richard Ratcliffe formed the Society's Research Award subcommittee to consider the eleven research proposals received, most of which were of a very high standard and concerned with worthwhile projects. Three excellent proposals were recommended to the executive committee and the Society made awards as follows:

To Mr Richard Barley for his proposed research and report on *A history and guide to the garden and parkland of the property "Talindert", several miles east of Camperdown, Victoria.*

To Ms Kate Low for her proposed research and thesis on *The Gardens and works of Betty Maloney and Jean Walker, and their role in the development of an Australian Garden Style.*

To Mrs Pauline Payne for her proposed research and written study, supported by slides etc, on *Dr Schomburgk and the Adelaide Botanic Garden 1865-1891.*

It was fortuitous that the research proposals judged the most desirable to support came from three different states. Richard Barley was based at the Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture, Burnley. Kate Low in the School of Landscape Architecture in the University of New South Wales, Sydney, and Pauline Payne in the History Department of the Faculty of Arts in the University of Adelaide.

The AGHS would like to express its thanks to the research supervisors and others in the educational institutions listed above who encouraged and guided the researchers in their excellent efforts.

The completed research will be lodged in a suitable public archive and extracts from the research reports may be published in this Journal.

Enquiries have already been received as to when the next round of Research Awards will be made. There is obviously a backlog of important work to be done in Australian garden history research and the AGHS hopes to announce a further round of awards in 1990.

John Brine

ELISABETH MURDOCH'S CRUDEN FARM



Much has been written of the garden at Cruden Farm, Langwarrin in Victoria, and of the parts of it designed in 1929-30 by Edna Walling. What is clear to the visitor today is that the historic garden now owes as much, if not more, to its owner, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch.

She is its powerhouse and ideas source — working, she cheerfully admits, around the Walling “bones” like the splendid stone walls. But she it is who, particularly in the past 20 years, has stretched and moulded the garden. No longer does it simply encircle the house, now it reaches out into the surrounding paddocks. Such is its harmony with this landscape that a truly pastoral aura is created, and it is difficult to settle on its most memorable feature. Is it the families of ducks paddling across the lake, the tall pale pink dahlias in the late autumn herbaceous border, the herd of cattle grazing peacefully beyond the post-and-rail fence, the towering elms on the lawn in front of the house, or the burgeoning new groves of eucalypts, oaks, crab apples, willows?

Dame Elisabeth, who is past, and inaugural patron of the Australian Garden History Society, came to Cruden Farm, then known as Home Farm, in 1928 as a 19-year-old bride. Then it was “a little garden full of colour”, in which she remembers plants like bonfire salvias and ageratum, and beds in the shape of a heart, a diamond and a club. She had grown up appreciating her mother’s spacious Edwardian-style garden in Toorak, loving the country, and absorbing the style of some of Victoria’s finer

Western District gardens. Having her own country garden stimulated her determination. “I was so young, I felt it was up to me to come up to scratch”. But she did not design it — would not have known where to begin, she says — and because her husband “always wanted things beautiful” and believed in consulting experts, it was logical that he should bring in Edna Walling, already then a sought-after designer.

After the garden was designed the Murdochs used Cruden Farm at weekends, and for the next few years Dame Elisabeth was busy having babies and travelling with her husband. She was fortunate, she says, in having a marvellous right-hand-man at Cruden Farm — Bill Duell, who established the garden, working with another man and two boys on huge tasks like bringing up all the soil for the walled gardens from a creek on the property. (The stonework was done by local men, who then asked for more work, and saw through the Depression years in construction of the beautiful stone stables adjoining the walled gardens).

Sixty years in a garden is a long time, and it is indeed a lucky gardener who not only has this opportunity, but who grows with it.

Most of the garden at Cruden Farm was burnt in a bushfire in 1944, including the rhythmic entrance avenue of closely-planted lemon-scented gums, whose evocative silver trunks invariably stop visitors in their tracks (and not just first-time visitors!). They were scorched and blackened, as was a fine clump of *Melaleuca styphelioides* which was part of Edna Walling’s original planting. Devastated, Dame Elisabeth asked Russell Grimwade: “What are we to do?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “I think you just have to wait and pray.” The gums and the melaleucas recovered.

Sir Keith Murdoch died in 1952 and Dame Elisabeth then moved fulltime to Cruden Farm. Not long after this she became president of Melbourne’s Royal Children’s Hospital, overseeing an enormous fund-raising drive and the rebuilding of the hospital. There didn’t seem to be enough hours in the day, but she rose at first light to put in several hours of gardening before her work commitments. The garden grew and developed, even over a period of 12 years (the late 1950s through to 1970) when she could find no skilled help, and laboured long and hard. Then she met her present “marvellous” gardener, Michael Morrison, who now is there four days a week and whose artistic input is as important to her as his physical contribution. Where her schedule allows, Dame Elisabeth, who celebrated her 80th birthday last January, tries to be with him for three half-days of this. “I can still weed, I can cut back, we work together pretty well. There is so much to do in a garden! We’re at it all the time, and still there’s more. It’s not that we’re lazy ...” She adds that going from a tank supply onto mains water, around 10 years ago, was an enormous spur in expanding the garden.

For her birthday Dame Elisabeth's family presented her with an electric buggy in which she circumnavigates her acreage with great verve. "Hold on," she calls excitedly as, admiring the peeling white trunks of the Walling melaleucas, we tilt precariously sideways down the bank which hides the tennis court. There is a moment of definite uncertainty until equilibrium is restored. "Well, I haven't done *that* before ...", and off we go to inspect the *Meliantbus major* on the side border ("one of my very favourite plants") and the gnarled original *Pyrus floribunda* which marks the corner of the elegantly-curved border but which is nearing the end of its useful life. "We've been talking about that tree, Michael and I, and I think we must just bite the bullet. It looks as if it has had it. You've got to think of the future all the time in a garden. People say I'm ruthless but I'm being ruthless for posterity."

This part of the garden was designed as a formal grid of bricked paths and annual beds, which Dame Elisabeth has altered in favour of gently curving borders and lawn. A feature is a delicate small plum, *Prunus spinosa*, chosen by Edna Walling but ruined in the 1944 bushfire. Luckily, cuttings taken from it after the fire have survived.

Dame Elisabeth's enthusiasm for her garden is all-encompassing. "I do love this buggy, it lets you have such a good overview. And it's marvellous for taking my elderly friends around." First we stop by a new piece of sculpture, 'Daedalus' by Erwin Fabian — "isn't it lovely? I'm *thrilled*" — then at one end of the tennis court, to inspect the chosen location for another grouping of *Melaleuca styphelioides*. We wheel around the extensive lake — built last year, and its creator's special joy — to look back at

the "new" post and rail fence (Michael Morrison's idea) which matches the fence running beside the entrance avenue of eucalypts, and to see where, last weekend, Dame Elisabeth and Michael put in (by hand) another 1000 daffodil bulbs. She spots a slumping new tree. "Oh, there's one leaning over, it needs tying up. Every time I come around I really ought to bring some stockings. Isn't it lucky I wear such a lot?" In the same breath, this gardener is both practical and inspired. It is an infectious combination.

"You've got to think of the future all the time in a garden. People say I'm ruthless but I'm ruthless for posterity"

Other writers have discussed the alteration in Cruden Farm's walled gardens, where Edna Walling's standard crab apples, espaliered fruit trees and roses have been replaced with herbaceous borders and a swimming pool. Dame Elisabeth wants it understood that she did not question the designer's choice of planting so much as siting and orientation of these gardens. She stresses that it took her decades of "struggling on" with the unhappy plants before she made the change. "I'm learning all the time and I only hope I can go on long enough to learn more. Experience is the teacher, of course. And I think all interested gardeners read a lot, and subconsciously absorb information." Sixty years in a garden is a long time, and it is indeed a lucky gardener who not only has this opportunity, but who grows with it. This is a "down" time for the borders — "I'm so sorry, they've gone over" — but still there is much to see, and to learn.

Every tree is a friend — the huge elms outside the front door, two most unusual oaks (*Quercus x firtbii*), the spreading white-trunked candlebark (*Eucalyptus rubida*) at one end of the stone stables. If a garden's history is made by its creators, then this story is worth retelling. "Oh, do I remember that candlebark! We had been to Mt Lofty and I got it and another one there, and brought them back in pots. It was just before I had Anna, and I was large and cumbersome. We arrived in Melbourne and Keith had to go to work. I needed to go to the bank so I said I'd do that, then take myself home on the tram. I fell up the steps of the National Bank! There were trees and soil everywhere, but a kind man picked me up and put the trees back in their pots. I planted them that weekend." All the trees at Cruden Farm are valued, and looked after. "Your trees must be tended, if you can afford it, you owe it to them. I don't buy expensive plants. If I am extravagant in any way it's in the care of my garden."

And more and more trees are planted, indeed for every venerable old friend there seem to be one or two newcomers. Dame Elisabeth says: "I hope any lasting success that I may have will be my wish to replace, to build. In a garden you must *always* replenish for the future."



Anne Latreille

Australian Plants in English Gardens

Robert Sweet's *Flora Australiasica* is a beautifully illustrated account of the Australian plants being cultivated in English gardens in the early nineteenth century. As such, it reflects the wealth of Australian flora that had been collected and propagated since the colony was founded in 1788 and also the degree of interest in horticulture current in England during this period — an interest fostered considerably by the pioneering efforts of Sir Joseph Banks, who continued to promote the investigation of Australia and its flora throughout his life.

Not a great deal is known about Robert Sweet. He was born in Cockington, near Torquay, in Devonshire in 1783, the son of William and Mary Sweet. Having shown an early interest in plants, at the age of sixteen he was sent to work under the supervision of his half-brother, James Sweet, who was gardener to Richard Bright of Ham Green, near Bristol.

Sweet remained in this position for nine years, leaving to take charge of a collection of plants at Woodlands, the residence of John Julius Angerstein. From here, in 1810, he entered into a partnership in the Stockwell Nursery, which was famous for its collection of rare exotic plants. Sweet's reputation must have been considerable by this time, for on 14 February 1812 he was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London. The Stockwell Nursery was dissolved in 1815, when Sweet took up a position as foreman to Whitley, Brames and Milne, nurserymen of Fulham. Four years later, in 1819, he went to work for James Colvill at the King's Road Nursery near Chelsea. Colvill was noted for his collection of rare plants, including *Rosa lawranceana*, which he raised in 1805, and for his early involvement in the China roses.

This must have been a busy time in Sweet's life, for in 1818 he published the first of his many botanical works, *Hortus Suburbanus Londinensis*, a catalogue of plants cultivated in the neighbourhood of London arranged according to the Linnean system. Just two years later, in 1820, he published the first volume of *Geraniaceae*, a study of the natural order of Gerania growing in the gardens of Great Britain, with colour illustrations by Edward Dalton Smith. This marked his first collaboration with Smith, who was to work on most of Sweet's other projects. *Geraniaceae* was published in five volumes between 1820 and 1830, initially in monthly parts, with four plates per month, although the parts of the last volume, from 1823 to 1830, appeared less regularly.

About Smith, too, little is known. He was born in 1800, and began his artistic career painting studies of flowers and fruit, exhibiting at the Royal Academy in 1816. He was to become best known as a portrait miniaturist, although as well as working with Sweet he did illustrations for various botanical and horticultural journals until 1836.

Sweet's work at this time was extraordinary. In 1821 he published *The botanical cultivator, or, instructions for the*

management and propagation of the plants cultivated in bothouses, greenhouses and borders, *in the gardens of Great Britain*, and this was followed by *The British Warblers: An Account of the Genus Sylvia*, a work describing his own observations of captive birds of this genus, which he published in three parts from 1823 onwards.

These works were evidently begun while Sweet was employed at the Colvill Nursery. His employer must have allowed him some latitude, for in 1825 he published the first volume of *The British Flower Garden*, containing "coloured figures and descriptions of the most ornamental and curious hardy flowering plants, including annuals, biennials, perennials and flowering shrubs; with their scientific and english names, best method of cultivation and propagation". This work ran to seven volumes, issued between 1825 and 1837. In the same year, *Cistinae* appeared, in which Sweet described 112 cistuses, helianthemums and halimiums, the majority of them from the Chelsea Physic Garden. For once, E. D. Smith was not the artist, it was illustrated by N. J. and W. Hart and Mrs Margaret Read Brown.

In addition, Sweet was a frequent contributor to Loudon's *Journal of Natural History* and his *Gardener's Magazine*, though he later fell out with Loudon, whom he accused of publishing in the magazine substantial extracts from his *Botanical Cultivator*, on the cultivation of amaryllia.

In February 1824, while still working at the Colvill Nursery, Sweet was charged at the Old Bailey with having received seven rare exotic plants, valued at £7, knowing



AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

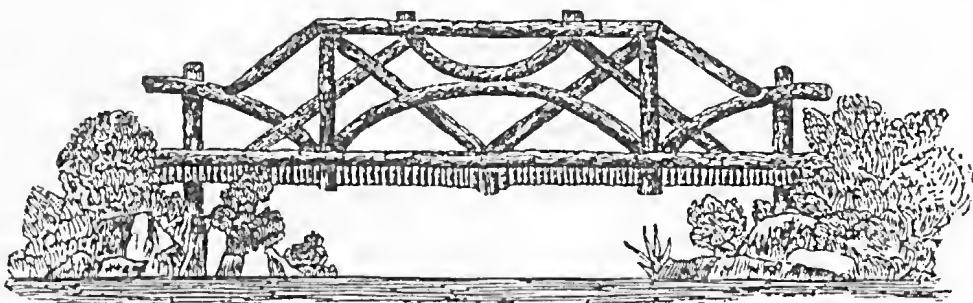
MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Society was formed in 1980 with a view to bringing together all those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history — horticulture, landscape design, architecture, and related subjects.

It's primary concern is to promote interest in and research into historic gardens, as a major component of the National Estate. It is also concerned, through a study of garden history, with the promotion of proper standards of design and maintenance that will be relative to the needs of today, and with the conservation of valuable plants that are in danger of being lost to cultivation. It aims to look at garden making in its wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

The benefits of membership include:

1. The Society's official journal six times a year.
2. An opportunity to participate on regular tours.
3. An opportunity to attend seminars, lectures, social functions, hands-on garden restoration days, a variety of garden visits, weekend conferences and other activities organised at a State level.
4. An opportunity to attend the Annual Conference, held in a different centre every year, combining visits to important public and private gardens with a variety of interesting speakers.
5. Knowing you are contributing to the conservation of important gardens as a component of the National Estate.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

(All subscriptions are renewable each June)

To: The Membership Secretary,
Australian Garden History Society,
P.O. Box 972, Bowral, N.S.W. 2576.

I/We wish to become a member of the Australian Garden History Society and enclose my subscription, as under

please tick

Single member \$32 ☐

Family member \$37 ☐
(2 adults and 2 children)

Corporate member \$50 ☐

*Donation

☐ Cheque/money order enclosed

☐ Please debit my Credit Card

☐ Bankcard

☐ Visacard

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Please list any particular interests or skills you have which may be of help to the AGHS.

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Please make cheques payable to:

The Australian Garden History Society

*The Society is affiliated with the Australian Council of National Trusts and is thereby able to benefit from the Trusts tax deductible status. Donations are welcome and should be made payable to the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and forwarded to the AGHS.

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

ACTIVITY BOOKING FORMS

If you would like to participate in any of the AGHS activities detailed in the Calendar of Events in this Journal please complete one of the forms below for *each* activity you wish to attend and forward it to the appropriate Branch Secretary (listed under Branch Contacts in this Journal) or as directed in the Calendar.

- Note:** 1. Refunds will only be allowed where one weeks' notice is given and tickets (if issued) returned for resale. A cancellation fee may be charged in some instances.
2. For ease of accounting we would prefer that membership payments are *not* included with activity payments.

Name of Activity

Date of Activity

Applicants Name

Applicants Address

..... Postcode

Telephone No. (H) (W)

No. of tickets required

... tickets for members @ \$ = \$

... tickets for non members @ \$ = \$

TOTAL

My cheque/money order for \$ is enclosed

Name of Activity

Date of Activity

Applicants Name

Applicants Address

..... Postcode

Telephone No. (H) (W)

No. of tickets required

... tickets for members @ \$ = \$

... tickets for non members @ \$ = \$

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Telephone No. (H) (W)

No. of tickets required

... tickets for members @ \$ = \$

... tickets for non members @ \$ = \$

TOTAL

My cheque/money order for \$ is enclosed

them to have been stolen from the Royal Gardens at Kew. The case achieved some notoriety, and was described in a contemporary pamphlet entitled *The trial of Robert Sweet at the Old Bailey before Mr Justice Best upon a charge of receiving seven rare exotic plants, valued at £7, knowing them to have been stolen from the Royal Garden at Kew*. Sweet was acquitted.

Sweet was charged at the Old Bailey with having received seven rare exotic plants valued at £7.

From 1826, Sweet concentrated on writing and publishing. More of a horticulturalist than a botanist, he did much to popularise plants through his attractive and well-illustrated books. In his career as an author and publisher, he reflected one of the major trends of his time: the publication of journals and books (often issued in parts) on horticulture and gardening.

The pioneer in this field was William Curtis, whose *Botanical Magazine* first appeared in 1787. Curtis saw this as being published for the "use of such ladies, gentlemen and gardeners as wish to become scientifically acquainted with the plants they cultivate." It was, he said, suggested by the patrons of his London Botanic Garden in Lambeth Marsh. In the initial years sales were good — around 3000 for the first volumes — though they declined in later years because of increasing competition, his success having inspired others to enter the field. The development of such journals was a reflection of the growing popularity of horticulture as a hobby for the upper and middle classes in England in the late eighteenth century, a factor which played a part in Banks' interest in the Australian flora.

The founding of the Horticultural Society, at a meeting of seven men in Hatchard's Bookshop in Piccadilly in 1804, was further evidence of this growing interest among the well educated in scientific horticulture. A few years later, in 1807, the *Transactions of the Horticultural Society of London* were published, and this was followed by the *Botanical Register; Consisting of Coloured Figures of Exotic Plants, Cultivated in British Gardens, with Their History and Mode of Treatment* (1815), and *British Flower Garden; Containing Coloured Figures and Curious Hardy Flowering Plants* (1823).

Such competition proved difficult for Curtis's *Botanical Magazine* and, indeed, for Sweet's own magazine, which after his death was merged with the *Botanical Register* in the hope that this would "render *Botanical Register* the cheapest, as it is the most beautiful, of the botanical periodicals, and eventually constitute it the completest and most authentic illustrated catalogue of plants in the whole world". Sadly, this was not to be the case, as it ceased publication in 1847.

Meanwhile, from 1826 Sweet directed his efforts almost entirely to publishing and writing, although he continued to cultivate plants in the garden of his house at Parson's Green, Fulham, where he had room for only a limited selection, and later, after moving house in 1830, in his larger garden at Chelsea, where he grew for sale rare and

choice plants that were difficult to obtain in England at that time.

His *Hortus Britannicus* was published in 1826, followed by *Flora Australiasica*, which first appeared in June 1827 and continued in its monthly parts until July 1828. Fourteen parts were published, each containing three pages of letterpress and four finely produced colour plates.

The title page of the work is extraordinary for its length and is worth quoting in full. It reads: *Flora Australiasica; or, a selection of handsome, or curious plants, natives of New Holland and the South Sea Islands; containing Coloured Figures and Description of some of the choicest Species most proper for the conservatory or greenhouse, and many of which will endure the cold of our climate, in the open air, with very little protection; with magnified dissections of their most essential parts, their names, descriptions and full account of the best method of cultivation and propagation. The greatest part are handsome evergreen shrubs, and many produce sweet-scented flowers; and as they are generally of free growth, and easily managed, they may be considered as the most desirable plants for cultivation. In one volume.*

At first glance it seems remarkable that Sweet should have been able to illustrate such an extensive range of Australian plants growing in English gardens by 1827, but by that time a vast range of plant specimens had been collected in Australia and brought back to England. While William Dampier had collected some specimens, Sir Joseph Banks was the first to do this systematically. He made only one trip to Australia, as a member of Cook's first voyage, but his influence was to extend far beyond this, as he directed and advised on the collecting of material by other botanists until his death in June 1820.

At first glance it seems remarkable that Sweet should have been able to illustrate such an extensive range of Australian plants growing in English gardens by 1827.

Two major factors influenced the study of the Australian flora at this time. First, botanical artists played a crucial role, since many plants were likely to die on the long voyage to England and even pressed material was subject to the ravages of mould and insects. The effects of high temperatures, high humidity and the ever-present danger of sea voyages were further problems. For these reasons, Australian flora was extensively illustrated by visiting artists, including such great illustrators as Parkinson and Bauer. Second — and more important from the point of Sweet's work — since it was in most cases impractical to return living plants to England, greater effort was put into collecting seeds, which could be transported back to Europe without deterioration to be cultivated by nurserymen.

On 13 July 1788 Governor Arthur Phillip sent some seeds collected in the new colony to Banks, and some of these found their way to a nurseryman named Lee at the Lee

and Kennedy Nursery at Hammersmith, who as a result was able to introduce *Banksia oblongifolia*, *B. serrata*, *Fabricia laevigata*, *Lambertia formosa* and *Melaleuca armillaris* to English gardeners that same year. Such was nurserymen's enthusiasm for the Australian flora that when potted plants died on the sea journey home the soil in which they had grown was cultivated in the hope that a few seeds might be buried and be able to be germinated. Banks would have received more seeds for his own use had not an illicit trade grown up by which seed was sold to people returning on the convict ships for resale to nurserymen of Britain.

Such was nurserymen's enthusiasm for Australian flora that when potted plants died on the sea journey home the soil in which they had grown was cultivated in the hope that a few seeds might lie buried and be able to be germinated.

The Lee and Kennedy Nursery provided Sweet with many of his specimens and was a major force in the early cultivation of Australian plants in England. It was founded about 1745 at The Vineyard, Hammersmith, where Burgundy wines had been produced well into the seventeenth century. James Lee's son, James, and daughter, Ann, joined the business, and it was so successful that John Loudon considered it to be "unquestionably the first nursery in Britain, or rather in the world". Many of Banks' seeds reached the Lee and Kennedy Nursery, where they were propagated, and in 1790 *Grevillia buxifolia*, *G. sericea* and *Crocea armillaris* were added to its catalogue. More important, the Lees decided to send out their own collector, David Burton, who travelled to Australia in 1790 on the storeship *Gorgon*.

It is possible that Burton was the grandson of the original James Lee, James' elder daughter, Susannah, having married a Mr Burton, but this is not known for certain. Trained as a gardener and surveyor, Burton travelled to Australia to take up the position of Superintendent of Convicts at Parramatta. There seems to have been some confusion about the term of his employment, for although he was to collect for Kew, Banks informed him that this was never the intention but that he was willing to employ Burton to collect for him and him alone at a salary of £20 a year.

The many Australian plants added to Lee and Kennedy's catalogues from 1791 to 1793 suggest that Burton returned large quantities of seed to his family nursery. Sadly, after only six months in Australia, he died in a shooting accident on the banks of the River Nepean. A contemporary account describes the event vividly:

Mr Burton, in order to have a better view of them ducks, got upon the stump of a tree, and, resting his hand upon the muzzle of his piece, raised himself by its assistance as high as he was able. By the same motion of this unfortunate young man the piece went off, and the

contents, entering at his wrist, forced their way up between the two bones of his right arm...

He died six days later.

The *Gordon*, which had carried Burton to Australia, returned to England bearing the usual range of plant material, sixty tubs of live plants containing 221 mature plants as well as seeds. Having already flowered, the plants were in good condition, but they were unlikely to remain so on the long sea voyage. Plants were carried in boxes about 1.25 metres long by half a metre wide and half a metre deep, with rope handles at the sides, which when half filled with soil could be carried by two men. As usual, these plants were destined for Sir Joseph Banks — on this occasion as a gift from Governor Phillip.

Burton was followed by other collectors, including George Caley, but it was Robert Brown who achieved perhaps the most dramatic success in the early years of the nineteenth century. Banks chose Brown to travel on the *Investigator* under Captain Matthew Flinders. Between late 1801 and 1805, when Brown returned to England, he had collected 3900 species of Australian plants, and by 1810, when he published his *Prodromus Florae Novae Hollandiae*, he was able to identify 4200 plant species from Australia.

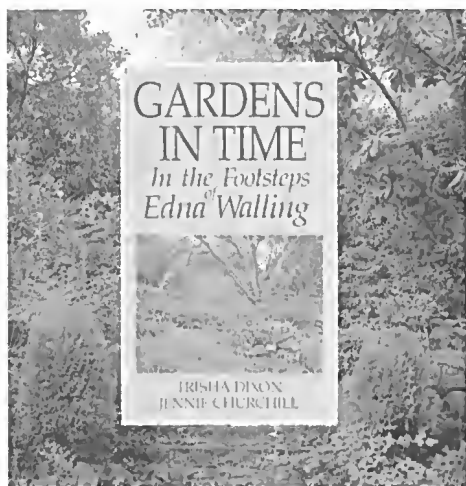
While much of this material was in the form of preserved specimens, it is apparent that by 1826 there was an extensive range of of Australian flora being cultivated in Britain for Sweet to select from. Several nurseries and major gardens had representative collections of Australian plants, and Sweet drew on these for his specimens. Notable among them was the Macleay Nursery at Clapton, which had added to its collection about sixty new species of the Proteaceae, which were among plants collected by William Baxter along the south coast including Wilson's Promontory and King George's Sound. Baxter's success is revealed by the fact that the nurseryman Joseph Knight paid £1500 for a collection of his seeds, including *Epacris compressa*, *Pimelia hyperica* and *Sollya fusiformis*. Sweet's old employers Whitley, Brames and Milne were also very helpful to him, supplying plants grown from seeds obtained from Charles Fraser, the first Superintendent of the Sydney Botanic Gardens. Fraser was appointed to this position in 1816 or 1818, and became Colonial Botanist on 1 January 1820. Other sources of Sweet's material were the private garden of Robert Barclay of Bury Hill and, of course, the Royal Gardens at Kew, where Allan Cunningham's collections were of particular significance.

Sweet's *Flora Australiasica* appears to have been his last major work. He had thought of publishing a journal, *British Botany*, but this got no further than an announcement accompanied by a few specimen pages and some illustrations.

In June 1831 Sweet suffered an attack of brain fever, from which he never fully recovered. With his unbounding energy he was soon at work again, but he succumbed to a subsequent attack and died on 20 January 1835, at the age of fifty-two. He left a widow but no children and is commemorated in the genus *Sweetia*.

John Patrick

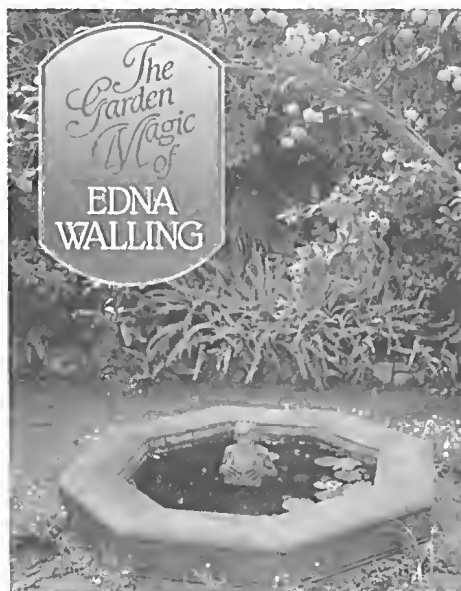
The name of Edna Walling is associated with many gardens in Victoria and southern New South Wales since the early 1920's when she left Burnley Horticultural College and set off on her brilliant career. A few years after her death in 1973, the Women's Committee of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) took up the initiative with their first edition of 1981 of *The Gardens of Edna Walling* by Peter Watts. Her legend lives on with two new books to hand, both published in 1988, about this remarkable woman and her ideas for the landscape and architecture of Australian gardens. Both books are recommended for gardeners today, for these ideas are by no means out of date.



Gardens in Time — In the Footsteps of Edna Walling by Trisha Dixon & Jennie Churchill (Angus & Robertson \$39.95). The two authors set out from their homes in southern NSW with enthusiasm to photograph, in colour, as many Walling gardens as possible; seeking to learn the comments of present owners, the memories of past owners and, of course, the writing of the designer herself. Of interest are the illustrations of original Walling plans, held in the la Trobe collection at the State Library of Victoria. The photographs make very pretty pictures with close shots of paths and steps, sundials and ponds, tree trunks and plants — some just fragments of sub divided gardens — and the now famous walls inspired from her native Yorkshire.

However one gets little or no idea of scale. A birds-eye view plan of the gardens today with the changing needs

of the occupants — and that includes the trees — to compare with Walling's plans could be fascinating and would really demonstrate how time has dealt with these gardens.



The Garden Magic of Edna Walling edited by Margaret Barrett (Anne O'Donovan through Penguin \$39.95).

This book is a collection of some 100 black & white photographs taken by Edna Walling of gardens that she designed with a text of her writings interspersed with her direct words of advice to anxious gardeners. I do not feel that Edna Walling would have cared for the additional colour photography of some of her gardens today remembering that she preferred "more greenery than colour" and they seem unnecessary and out of place. Perhaps the publishers insisted on some colour photography — finding they can sell "more colour than greenery".

The loss of captions, through fading of the negatives, or dates, if there were any, do not matter to her lovely photographs of natural gardens — romantic and timeless.

Of great interest are her photographs of the cottages that she designed at Bickleigh Vale with their simple interiors and gardens.

At a time when one of our worst imports, the dark Californian bungalow swept through our suburbs, Edna Walling did her best to introduce through her magazine articles, practical ideas for good cottage architecture.

Caroline Simpson

Barossa, Southern Vales Garden and Winery Tour, South Australia

The first national tour of the AGHS was held in April this year. It was an enjoyable tour where I am sure new friends were made, and a greater insight gained into historic gardens and their management problems. Unfortunately South Australia was suffering from a dry spell and this was evident in many of the gardens. The following gardens were visited — *Martinselle, Lindsay Park, Colliugrove, Old Anlaby, Anembo, Beechwood Garden, Gambles Cottage, and Adelaide Botanic Garden* as well as *Hans Heysens House*. Highlights of the wineries were Yalumba, Seppeltsfield and Hardy's Reynella Winery with their beautifully preserved buildings and delightful garden surroundings. Other smaller wineries were also visited.

The gardens ranged from the large ones at *Martinselle* and *Old Anlaby* to smaller cottage gardens at *Anembo* and *Gambles Cottage*.

Ross Roses proved to be an excellent supplier of roses with an extensive display and many in our group could not resist the temptation to place orders.

Adelaide's parks and the Botanic Garden with its magnificent trees were a fitting conclusion to an exhilarating five days.

Robin Lewarne



Coming Tours

BULBS AND BLOSSOM TOUR, VICTORIA'S WESTERN DISTRICT.

This tour will take place in September 1989. See Calendar of Events.

BRISBANE TO SYDNEY TOUR.

See October Calendar of Events.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

To make a booking for any of the events listed in this Calendar fill out one of the Activity Booking Forms included in this Journal and forward it with your remittance to the address indicated.

JULY 1989

Sunday 2

Tasmanian Branch — DONNA SOMERVILLE will lecture on *The Australian Herbaceous Border*. Ms. Somerville has worked for the Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne and the perennial border she took some two years to develop there is a masterpiece. The lecture will be held at the Bowls Club in Campbell Town at 1.00pm. Tickets are \$7 (members) or \$8 (non-members). Afternoon tea included. Enquiries and bookings to Branch Secretary.

Saturday 8

Queensland Branch — Outing to North Coast, Buderim and Maleny Gardens. Enquiries to Branch Secretary.

Saturday 15 and Sunday 16

ACT Branch — MID WINTER SEMINAR *Recording and Restoring Gardens*. Saturday afternoon lectures at the Canberra College of Advanced Education will be followed by a dinner and a Sunday morning visit to The Lodge (The Prime Minister's Residence). Cost: Members \$50.00. Non-Members \$55.00 (which includes afternoon tea and dinner). For more information contact the Branch Chairman, Mr Richard Ratcliffe on (062) 86 1159 or send a completed booking slip with payment to the Branch Secretary.

AUGUST 1989

Sunday 6

Victorian Branch — ROSE PRUNING, Bleak House, Malmsbury. Expert pruners will demonstrate techniques on roses of varying habits and Jenny Phillips will give a talk on botanical illustrations. Event begins at 1.30pm, tickets cost \$9, limited numbers, contact Di Renou for more information on (03) 417 3734.

Sunday 6

Southern NSW Branch — BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING to be held in the Library of Oxley College, Burradoo. Guest Speaker will be Mr Michael Bligh, a Landscape Architect who specialises in cold climate country gardens. His illustrated talk will con-

sider the basic principles of good garden design including the property entrance, paddock planting, the parkland as well as the garden. Tea and coffee served from 5.30, formal proceedings to commence at 6.00pm sharp. For further information please contact Mr Michael Bligh on (048) 21 8462.

Tuesday 8

ACT Branch — SLIDE PRESENTATION/TALK — *Garden History Society Conference Visits* presented by Richard Ratcliffe. This event will commence at 7.30pm at the Horticultural School, Western TAFE, Canberra. Cost: FREE. Tea/coffee by donation.

Thursday 10

Queensland Branch — BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING — at the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens commencing at 7.30pm.

Sunday 20

Tasmanian Branch — BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. This will be held at Longford and John Gray, well known for his knowledge of plants, will be speaking.

Tuesday 29

Victorian Branch — Professor Rod Home will lecture at the Herbarium in South Yarra about the correspondence of Ferdinand von Mueller. Held jointly with the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, this event costs \$3 for members and \$4 for non-members and will begin promptly at 8.00pm. For more information contact the "Friends" on (03) 650 6398. Bookings to the Branch Secretary.



Ferdinand von Mueller

AUGUST

West Australian Branch — BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING with a guest speaker. Details to be advised. Further information from Branch Secretary.

SEPTEMBER 1989

★ THE BULBS AND BLOSSOMS TOUR

This tour will take members to some unique private gardens in the Western District of Victoria. For more details and registration forms please see the enclosed Tour Brochure.

Friday 1

Southern NSW Branch — SLIDE PRESENTATION and TALK by Mrs Betty Hoskins about the history and development of three historic Southern Highlands gardens including "Cardrona", owned by Sir Cecil and Lady Hoskins, "Wensley Dale" owned by Don and Betty Hoskins and "Invergowrie", previously owned by Sir Cecil and Lady Hoskins. This event will take place at Mt Broughton Country Resort in Moss Vale commencing at 8.00pm. Tickets will be \$8.00 for Members or \$10.00 for Non-Members (including light refreshments afterwards). If you wish to enjoy a delicious dinner beforehand, we recommend that you book a table in the charming Baronial Hall at Mt Broughton. For more information contact Mrs Kelly Wright on (048) 611 732. Bookings to Branch Secretary.

Saturday 2

ACT Branch — BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING — to be held at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, guest speaker to be confirmed. Cost: \$12.00 (includes afternoon tea). Bookings to Branch Secretary.

Saturday 10

Tasmanian Branch — Trip to MORELIA BULB FARM at Bruny. This should be a very interesting outing with excellent opportunities to purchase unusual bulbs. Enquiries to Branch Secretary.

Saturday 16 to Sunday October 15

ACT Branch — FLORIADE the Canberra Spring Festival centred at Commonwealth Park, Canberra (includes floral and horticultural displays, music, entertainment, garden visits, etc.) For further information contact Agnes Martin at the ACT Parks and Conservation Service on (062) 46 2085.

Saturday 30 to Monday October 2

ACT Branch — LONG WEEKEND AT HARTWOOD STATION. This is to be a WORKING BEE so there is no cost but

members are requested to BYO everything. For further information please contact Mr Jim Webb on (069) 21 1935. Sure to be great fun!

OCTOBER 1989

Friday 27 to Monday 30

THE AGHS ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND NATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. This year the Conference will be based in Toowoomba, Queensland. For more information please see the enclosed Conference Brochure with attached Booking Form.

Monday 30 to Saturday November 4

BRISBANE TO SYDNEY TOUR. A special bus tour will be offered to Conference Delegates wishing to explore a variety of interesting public and private gardens between Brisbane and Sydney. Details of this tour will be enclosed in the next issue of this Journal. If you think you will participate and require information sooner please ring Head Office (048) 87 1310 or simply complete a booking slip with your personal details and request that information about this tour be sent to you as soon as it is available.

Dates to be advised:

West Australian Branch — One day visit to gardens in the country town of York.

Sydney Branch — Macquarie Street day with visits to the Parliament House roof garden, Government House, Botanic Garden and a look at the new landscape development in Sydney's premier street. Enquiries to Robin Lewarne on (02) 953 1916.

NOVEMBER 1989

Thursday 9

Queensland Branch — BRANCH MEETING at the Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens. Enquiries to Branch Secretary.

Sunday 12

Tasmanian Branch — PLANT FAIR at "ELSMERE". This is a fund-raising event for the Society which proved to be great fun and tremendously successful when held last year for the first time. Members donate their unusual plants, cuttings and other produce which are then sold at the fair. Enquiries to Branch Secretary.

Sunday 12

ACT Branch — LANYON SPRING FAIR

— AGHS Annual Plant Fair located at Lanyon Historic Homestead near Canberra. Always a lovely day. Enquiries to Branch Secretary.

Sunday 26

ACT Branch — Garden visits to NIMMITABEL AND COOMA. The cost will be approximately \$15 and will include lunch. For more information contact Sue Jardine (064) 54 6210.

DECEMBER 1989

Thursday 7

Victorian Branch — CHRISTMAS PARTY at the Fairfield Boathouse.

Saturday 9

Queensland Branch — CHRISTMAS OUTING AND PICNIC. Venue to be advised.

Advertising bookings and inquiries

Bill Richards
Richards Communications Pty Ltd
270 Pacific Highway
CROWS NEST NSW 2065

Phone (02) 437 5373
Fax: (02) 437 5770

National Committee

Under Rule 13(3) the following members of the National Committee, having served for a continuous period of three years, retire at the Annual General Meeting 1989, but may seek re-election:

Mr J. Patrick

Mr R. Ratcliffe

Nominations to the National Committee must be made in writing, signed by two members of the Society and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the form of nomination), and must reach the Secretary not less than 21 days before the date fixed for the Annual General Meeting, that is before 8th October, 1989. A brief resume of no more than 100 words should accompany each nomination.

CAN YOU HELP?

The AGHS has need of the following equipment. If you think you can help please contact the executive officer.

Dictaphone

Tape Recorder

Answering Machine

ACT/MONARO/RIVERINA BRANCH

Unless otherwise specified, for all information please contact the Branch Secretary:

Ms. Astrida Uptis
5 Baines Place
Lyneham ACT 2602
Ph: (062) 47 0665

QUEENSLAND BRANCH

For all information please contact the Branch Secretary:

Mr D. Perkins
6 Creswick Street
Clayfield Qld 4011
Ph: (07) 262 2193 a.h.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA BRANCH

Unless otherwise specified, for all information please ring Mr Trevor Nottle on (08) 339 4210 a.h. or address correspondence to:

The Secretary,
AGHS — S.A. BRANCH
"Walnut Hill"
5 Walker Street
Stirling SA 5152

SOUTHERN NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH

Unless otherwise specified, for all information please ring Mrs Leanne Timbs on (048) 871 310 or address correspondence to:

The Secretary
AGHS — SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH
P.O. Box 972
Bowral NSW 2576

SYDNEY AND

NORTHERN NSW BRANCH

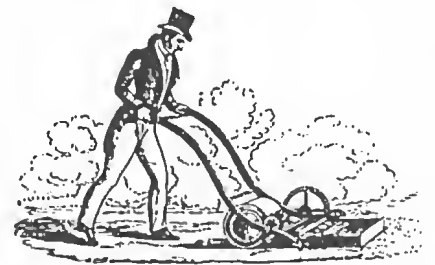
For information please contact:

Mrs Robin Lewarne
60a Shell Cove Road
Neutral Bay NSW 2089
Ph: (02) 953 1916

TASMANIAN BRANCH

For information please contact the Chairperson:

Mrs Fairie Nielson
"Pigeon Hill"
RSD 469
BURNIE Tas 7320
Ph: (004) 33 0077
or the Secretary:
Mrs Jenny Prevost
P.O. Box 29
PERTH TAS 7300
Ph: (003) 98 6252



VICTORIAN BRANCH

For information please contact:

Francine Gilfedder
Branch Secretary
310 Wattletree Road
East Malvern Vic 3145
Ph: (03) 266 3137

WEST AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

For information please contact:

Ms. Anne Willox
Branch Secretary
P.O. Box 814
West Perth WA 6005
Ph: (09) 381 1675

NEW SOUTH WALES

New Sydney Branch

A Branch is being formed to cover the Sydney Region where we have many members. A full programme of activities is being planned. If you would like to help get this branch going the convenor, Mrs Robin Lewarne, would like to hear from you (see Contacts).

Two Conservation Issues

The AGHS prepared a submission objecting to the impact on the Sydney Botanic Gardens of the proposed hotel development in Woolloomooloo Bay. The Society has also been active in pressing the Government to provide for the adequate conservation and maintenance of the garden at Yaralla, Concord. Several years ago the AGHS prepared conservation guidelines for this important Edwardian garden and estate.

Central Coast Visit

The visit to four sub-tropical gardens on the Central Coast (Gosford/Terrigal area) in March 1989 was the first activity of the newly formed Sydney Committee. We enjoyed the relatively new *Palmdale Memorial Garden* (at Ourimbah) with its fine collection of sub-tropical and warm temperate plants. The undulating terrain has been cleverly landscaped to fulfil the purpose of this lawn cemetery/garden crematorium to achieve a delightful area of space and tranquillity.

Lunch was at *Sculpture Park* 88 at Green Point which has been landscaped so that each piece of sculpture has its individual setting yet the 8 acre park has a unity of its own.

In the afternoon we visited an AGHS member's garden at Killarney Vale on the shores of Tuggerah Lakes. *Askania Rainforest Park* was our last stop. This isolated narrow valley allows the public to see, hear, enjoy, and experience the beauty of a little disturbed rainforest with its wonderful trees, lush palms, and ferns.

Robin Lewarne

TASMANIA

In February garden visits to *Connerville* and *Ravensthorpe* were well attended and perfect weather

contributed to a memorable day's outing. Features at *Connerville* included the very successful treated pine and mesh climbing frame massed with sweet peas and morning glory, while at *Ravensthorpe* members were particularly impressed by the subdued colour arrangements of plants and shrubs. In April about 60 members enjoyed a guided visit to the *Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens* and *Government House*. Mr Tony May, Botanical Gardens Superintendent, provided a most interesting commentary interspersed with colourful anecdotes.



Connerville

VICTORIA

The Victorian Branch of the AGHS has had a busy and interesting six months. We have been involved in many issues of concern to gardeners, being represented on advisory committees and taking an active part in planning programmes. Our functions sub-committee has been very active and offered us some enjoyable and stimulating outings.

Outings and Lectures

In February and March we had two functions associated with Carl Bogue Luffman who was principal of the Burnley Horticultural College in the early years of this century and was a noted garden designer. He was an Englishman of very definite views whose career was full of controversy. The first function was a visit to the *Metropolitan Golf Club* where Luffman had designed some of the planting and layout around the Club House. John Patrick and John Hawker took us on a guided walk among the magnificent trees, and this was followed by dinner and a talk on Bogue Luffman's life and work.

In March we visited gardens in the Shepparton district including *Noorilim*, *Karlsruhe* and *Killamount*. The last of these dates from about 1870, though in 1907 Luffman removed its formal

garden creating a 2½ acre 'natural' garden. The new owners are restoring this important garden. *Noorilim* is also being restored by its new owners and we were filled with admiration for the energy of both families. In late April we visited gardens on the Mornington Peninsula including the *Little Golf Course* near Frankston where Grace Fraser talked about its landscaping. We went on to *Westerfield* (built by Russell Grimwade in 1924), *Costerton*, *Sages Cottage*, *Cruden Farm*, *Heronswood*, *Shipway Lodge* and *Sorrento Park*.

The weekend was made a success by the generosity of the garden owners, who provided us with written histories of their gardens, old photographs and fascinating talks. We thank them all for their time and allowing us to share their gardens.

WEST AUSTRALIA

The West Australian group is growing rapidly. In February it began the year's activities with an illustrated talk on the 1988 Annual Conference in Melbourne. This inaugural event was followed, in April, by a visit to the private garden *Wirra Willa* in Armadale, an outer Perth suburb. In June local members enjoyed hearing John Viska speak about his research on *Wellington Nursery*, a 19th Century West Australian nursery.

The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history — horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in its wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

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